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SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA COMMENTS ON LARIJANI-SOLANA MEETING

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary: MFA Deputy U/S Rafet Akgunay told Ambassador on April 27 that EU Foreign Policy Chief Solana told the Turks that the gap between the EU and Iranian positions was very wide. Iranian Supreme National Security Council Secretary Larijani complained to FM Gul that the EU was not

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being flexible. Turkey had not given Larijani any particular message on this occasion, Akgunay said. Larijani's bilateral meeting with NSC Director Alpogon was canceled because the EU meeting lasted longer than expected. End summary

¶2. (C) Akgunay explained that since Turkey had not participated in the April 25-26 Ankara talks on Iran's nuclear program, he could only offer comments that Gul and others had gleaned on the margins. The suggestion that Turkey be the venue for the meeting had come from Iranian FM Mottaki, he said. After the delegations met on the evening of April 25 for about three hours, Solana and Larijani continued tete-a-tete. Gul hosted a breakfast for the delegations, and the meeting continued until early afternoon on April 26. Prior to the meeting PM Erodogan hosted a bilateral lunch for Larijani.

¶3. (C) Solana told Gul that the gap in EU and Iranian positions was very wide, according to Akgunay. The Iranians had not been helpful on the enrichment suspension issue, but Solana hoped talks would continue.

¶4. (C) Larijani complained to Gul that the EU had not been flexible, Akgunay said. Larijani commented that the Europeans and even Russia were applying more pressure than the U.S., a remark Akgunay ascribed to Iran's "old tactic" of playing off adversaries against each other. Larijani's deputy reportedly told Turkish officials that the difference in positions was wide, but that Larijani was prepared to continue discussions. At the same time, Akgunay said Mohammed Sayeed of the Iranian Atomic Energy Board told Deputy Undersecretary Sinirlioglu that he thought the talks might result in some progress, and that Iran was ready to meet with the United States. Akgunay commented that Turkey understood there were divergent opinions among Iranian officials.

¶5. (C) Akgunay said that Gul had not given any particular message to Larijani on this occasion, although Turkey has in the past and continues to urge Iranian consideration for the P5 proposal. He said that Turkey is ready and willing to host a follow-on meeting, but that he understood the next meeting will be at another location. There was no mention by the Iranians of a rumor of a softening U.S. position on the condition of complete suspension of enrichment, but Akgunay noted the MFA had heard of rumors in Tehran that some kind of

deal was in the offing.

¶6. (C) Akgunay declined to comment on the lunch Erdogan hosted for Larijani, other than to say unrelated bilateral issues had been discussed including the unsolved disappearance of former Iranian Deputy Defense Minister Alireza Askari, last seen in Istanbul on February 7. Akgunay told Ambassador that the Gul breakfast was non-substantive. The bilateral meeting planned for Larijani with NSC Director Alpogan was canceled because the EU meeting had lasted longer than expected and Larijani had to return to Tehran.

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